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# Iraq's Tikritis: Power Base of Saddam Husayn

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A Research Paper

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February 1987

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# **Iraq's Tikritis: Power Base of Saddam Husayn**

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**A Research Paper**

This paper was prepared by [ ] Office of  
Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, with a  
contribution by [ ] Office of  
Leadership Analysis. It was coordinated with the  
Directorate of Operations. [ ]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
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### Iraq's Tikritis: Power Base of Saddam Husayn

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#### Summary

*Information available  
as of 12 January 1987  
was used in this report.*

Iraqi President Saddam Husayn maintains a tight grip on power in large part through fellow townsmen from Tikrit. He has appointed them to key security, military, and party positions. Although the Tikritis have been prominent for some time, the war appears to have increased Saddam's reliance on them. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] last summer Saddam appointed two more Tikritis to the ruling party's Regional Command. [REDACTED]

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The Tikritis, as a group, do not appear to have a significant impact on Iraqi foreign or non-security-related domestic policies. Tikritis are a small minority in the Cabinet, the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, and the Revolutionary Command Council, Iraq's highest ruling body. Their control of the security apparatus is almost total, however, providing Saddam with a strong power base to pursue policies, such as the current moderation in Iraqi foreign policy, that are opposed by some members of the ruling Ba'th Party. [REDACTED]

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During the past three years Saddam has attempted to strengthen his grip on power by relying more heavily on the paternal side of his family. He has elevated his paternal cousins, the Majids, and has ousted his half brother Barzan al-Tikriti, who is from the maternal side, as head of Iraq's Intelligence Service, one of the most powerful positions in Iraq. The Majids and other Tikritis were installed as chiefs of the security services and as members of the Military Bureau. [REDACTED]

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Saddam's favoritism toward the Majids, the grooming of his sons for leadership positions, and his half brothers' attempts to aggrandize power have intensified feuding within the family. Such factionalism is likely to persist as the Majids work to strengthen their position by investigating the corrupt business activities of Barzan and Khayrallah Tilfah, the patriarch of the family. Despite a purge of Barzan's supporters from the Intelligence Service, Barzan retains considerable strength in the family. [REDACTED]

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Saddam's reliance on his relatives narrows his support base and links him to popular and party criticism of abuse of power by Tikritis. There is widespread resentment about the spoiled, arrogant behavior of Saddam's sons and the corruption of Tilfah and Barzan. The current anticorruption campaign probably will lessen such criticism, but, unless Saddam reins in his sons, they will continue to be a source of complaints. [REDACTED]

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The Tikritis undoubtedly will seek to maintain a degree of power if Saddam is removed from office. If Saddam dies of natural causes or through an assassination that is not part of a broader based coup attempt, the chances are good that the Tikritis will maintain key positions. The Tikritis may not have sufficient clout to retain the presidency, but they will be well positioned to maintain control of the security services and the Military Bureau. Failure to do so would expose the Tikritis to retribution for their past abuses, particularly the misuse of Iraq's security apparatus. The Tikritis might champion Saddam's maternal cousin and Minister of Defense Adnan Khayrallah to prevent a powerful non-Tikriti such as First Deputy Prime Minister Ramadan from becoming president. Over a longer period of time, a Tikriti on the paternal side—possibly chief intelligence and internal security coordinator Ali Hasan al-Majid—may develop sufficient strength to succeed Saddam. [ ]

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If Saddam and his close associates are removed by a coup, the Tikritis will be in a less favorable position. If the coup is led by factions among the Tikritis, it would risk a breakdown of the Tikritis' power structure that has been critical to Saddam's rule. Alternatively, a non-Tikriti coup would be aimed at removing both Saddam and his Tikriti power base. [ ]

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Even if the Tikritis remain in key positions in the aftermath of Saddam's ouster, rivalries among the Tikritis will lessen their ability to retain power for an extended period. No single Tikriti is likely to have the political acumen or power base to rule as forcefully as Saddam. Without the stability provided by the Tikritis under Saddam's direction, Iraqi leaders are likely to espouse more radical policies that leave them less exposed to criticism from the party's ideologues. This would make improvements in US-Iraqi ties much more difficult and could contribute to a period of political instability in Iraq similar to the one before the Ba'thist takeover in 1968. [ ]

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**Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Summary	iii
Where the Tikritis Are	2
The Security Apparatus	2
The Military	2
Tikritis and the Ba'th Party	3
Where the Tikritis Are Not	3
Saddam's Divided Family	3
Khayrallah Tilfah: The Patriarch	3
Adnan Khayrallah	4
Saddam's Sons: Heirs Apparent?	7
Barzan al-Tikriti: The Eclipsed Half Brother	7
The Majid Cousins—Rising Stars	8
Jockeying for Power	8
Popular Perceptions of the Tikritis	9
Trends and Implications	10

**Appendix**

	13
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vi



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## Iraq's Tikritis: Power Base of Saddam Husayn

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Tikritis, fellow townsmen of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, have become synonymous with his strong and repressive regime. They occupy key positions, particularly in the military and security services. In our view, Saddam's dependence upon his fellow townsmen has increased in recent years as the protracted war with Iran has created new challenges to his control. At the same time, the Tikritis are rent with serious rivalries, and these divisions have deepened during the past three years. According to US Embassy reporting, nearly every Iraqi is aware of stories of feuding, corruption, and scandalous behavior by Saddam's relatives. Thus far, Saddam appears to have dealt skillfully with the Tikritis—using some to help him contain or undercut others—but the public's negative view of the omnipresent Tikritis undercuts Saddam's popular support.

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Iraqis use the term Tikriti variously to apply to Saddam's extended family and, according to the US Embassy, to the residents and tribesmen of Tikrit and nearby villages. the term also applies—we believe to a much lesser extent—to residents of the Province of Salah ad-Din. Saddam himself grew up in a village a few kilometers south of Tikrit. Saddam's family belongs to the al-Bikat section of the Albu Nasir tribe of the Shammar tribal confederation, according to an academic study.

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The highly repressive Iraqi political system limits foreigners' access to its inner workings. We believe that the regime considers the role of the Tikritis in the power structure a particularly sensitive topic.

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### *Tikrit's Rise to Prominence*

*Tikrit has a population of about 100,000. It was an industrial center on the Tigris River until the late 19th century when the introduction of steam-powered vessels caused a drop in demand for its principal product, rafts of inflated skins. At that time, many Tikritis migrated 175 kilometers downriver to the al-Takartah (Tikriti) quarter of Baghdad in search of work. Others turned to the military for advancement. According to an academic study, the influential nationalist politician Mawlud Mukhlis was responsible for getting Tikritis admitted to the Iraqi Military Academy and the armed services in the 1920s and 1930s. Mukhlis, a protege of King Faysal I, was himself a Tikriti and was married to a relative of the late Ba'thist President Ahmad al-Bakr, a graduate of the academy. Bakr, along with another Ba'thist general from Tikrit and fellow Tikriti Saddam Husayn, a civilian, was instrumental in toppling the non-Ba'thist regime of Abd al-Rahman Arif in 1968. (According to an academic study, Arif had relied largely on Army officers drawn from his home region of Ar Ramadi.)*

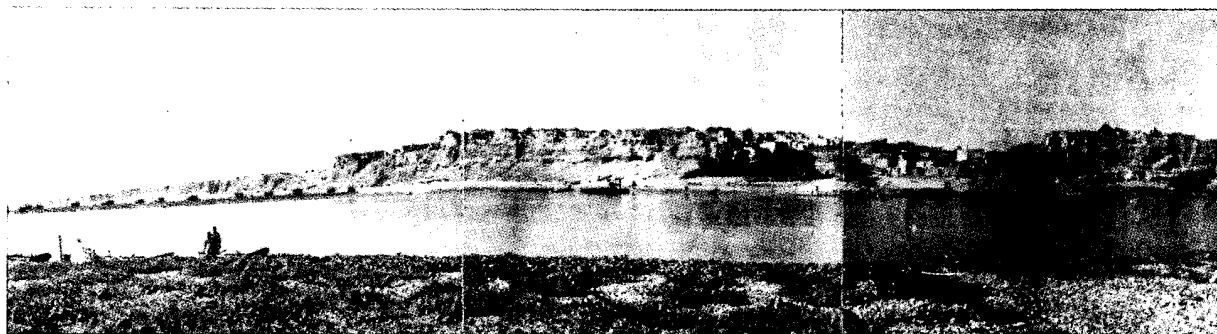
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*Since coming to power, Ba'thist Tikritis have enhanced the city's importance. The US Embassy says that Tikrit was little more than a stop on the road from Baghdad to Mosul when most prominent Tikritis were born 40 to 50 years ago. Besides benefiting from considerable economic development projects, the city gained regional political significance when it was made the capital of the new Province of Salah ad-Din in the mid-1970s. Until the reorganization Tikrit had been part of Baghdad Province. In recent years an Air Force base and academy, an armored training center, and an Army camp have been located at Tikrit.*

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Tikrit [redacted]

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The regime's sensitivity to the popular perception of Tikriti dominance led to the ban in 1976 on the use of surnames derived from tribes or birthplaces to identify government officials. Many Iraqis follow the custom of employing their birthplace as a surname. Sa'dun Shakir and Saddam Husayn, for example, used to bear the surname al-Tikriti. This move has made dominance by the Tikritis less obvious and their identification more difficult, although some Iraqis continue to be known by the al-Tikriti name. [redacted]

former IIS Deputy Director Sab'awi al-Tikriti. Other Tikritis holding senior security positions are Husayn Kamil al-Majid, Director of the Presidential Security Service; Ali Hasan al-Majid, chief coordinator of internal security and intelligence services; and Fadhil Salfij al-Azzawi, Deputy Director of the IIS.

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#### The Military

The Tikriti role in the military also is extensive and no less obvious. [redacted]

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[redacted] Tikritis are in more command positions relative to their numbers than any other group in the military. [redacted] 90 percent of the officers in Saddam's headquarters are Tikritis.

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Saddam's maternal cousin, Adnan Khayrallah, is the Minister of Defense and, as a member of the Military Bureau of the Regional Command of the ruling Ba'th Party, appoints and monitors military officers. Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Hamid Sha'ban, like many of his predecessors, is a Tikriti, as are at least two of the eight Army corps commanders: Thabit Sultan, IV Corps, and Mahir Abd al-Rashid, VII Corps. We have identified only one Army division commander from Tikrit—Brig. Nawfil Isma'il of the 8th Division—but we suspect there are others because such a relatively high percentage of corps commanders are Tikritis. [redacted]

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#### Where the Tikritis Are

##### The Security Apparatus

Tikritis—most of them relatives of Saddam—head Iraq's principal security organizations and appear to be disproportionately represented in the security services. Saddam's preference for Tikritis in sensitive positions traces back to the Ba'thist takeover in 1968. In his capacity as assistant secretary general of the party, Saddam created the Public Relations Office—the Ba'thists' intelligence and security organ and predecessor of the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS). [redacted] Saddam immediately appointed at least a dozen Tikritis to the organization. Several of them subsequently rose to prominent security posts including Minister of Interior Sa'dun Shakir, Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service Fadhil al-Barraq, ex-IIS Director Barzan al-Tikriti, and

The Tikritis have overlapping networks of informants to monitor the military. According to the US Embassy, the Directorate of Military Intelligence and the

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Political Guidance Bureau of the Ministry of Defense report to their Tikriti chiefs on the loyalties of troops. The Regional Command's Military Bureau, run by Tikritis, conducts similar operations. [ ]

#### **Tikritis and the Ba'th Party**

The Tikritis' presence in the Ba'th Party apparatus does not approach their control in the military and security services. The same three Tikritis in the Cabinet serve on the nine-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the highest ruling body in Iraq. They also serve—along with fellow Tikriti Ali Hasan al-Majid, chief coordinator of internal security and intelligence activities, and Kamil Yassin Rashid from Tikrit's Salah ad-Din Province—on the 17-member Regional Command, which directs the party. Another Tikriti, chief of the Iraqi Intelligence Service Fadhil al-Barraq, is a candidate member of the Command. Although technically not part of the party, the RCC directs the implementation of party decisions. Saddam is chairman of both the RCC and the Regional Command. [ ]

Non-Tikriti Izzat Ibrahim leads the day-to-day operations of the party, and other non-Tikritis run nearly all the bureaus of the RCC and the Regional Command. Significant exceptions are the key security-related Military and National Security Bureaus of the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, both of which are run by Tikritis. [ ]

Saddam's cousin Abid Hasan al-Majid chairs the National Security Bureau. [ ]

#### **Where the Tikritis Are Not**

Non-security-related ministries and organizations are largely in the hands of non-Tikritis. These officials operate with considerable authority in substantive [ ]



*Saddam Husayn with members of his family* [ ]

matters as long as they do not challenge Saddam's ultimate authority and do not deal with security or military affairs. Saddam's 35-man Cabinet contains only two Tikritis besides himself— Minister of Defense Adnan Khayrallah and Minister of Interior Sa'dun Shakir. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, a Chaldean Christian from Mosul, is widely acknowledged as the country's most influential foreign policy architect. In economic affairs, the US Embassy in Baghdad describes First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan from Mosul as Iraq's economic "czar." Two other key economic policy makers— Minister of Oil Qasim Ahmad Taqi al-Uraybi and Minister of Trade Hassan Ali—are non-Tikritis. [ ]

#### **Saddam's Divided Family**

The appointment of members of Saddam's extended family to sensitive positions suggests that he, like many Arab leaders, has the greatest trust in his relatives. Even so, there are serious divisions among the family's principal branches and leaders. [ ]

#### **Khayrallah Tilfah: The Patriarch**

Khayrallah Tilfah, Saddam's maternal uncle, has enjoyed considerable influence as a result of having been foster father to Saddam as he grew up. Saddam's mother was widowed near the time of his birth, and Tilfah largely reared the youth after his mother's [ ]

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remarriage a few years later. Saddam lived with Tilfah in Tikrit and later in Baghdad, where Saddam pursued his education and a career in revolutionary politics. According to a Western academic study, Tilfah imparted to Saddam a strong sense of nationalism that was derived, in part, from Tilfah's internment by the British for participating in an uprising in 1941. [ ]

Tilfah's influence with Saddam is strongly augmented by his children. Tilfah's daughter Sajida is married to Saddam. Tilfah's son Adnan is Minister of Defense, Deputy Prime Minister, and member of both the Ba'th Regional Command and the RCC. Another daughter and son are married to siblings of Saddam's now deceased political ally, President Ahmad al-Bakr. President Bakr was a second cousin of Tilfah. Still another Tilfah daughter is married to Saddam's half brother, Barzan al-Tikriti. [ ]

Tilfah has long played an important role in Tikriti tribal and family matters. We believe this stems from Tilfah's family lineage, his closeness to Saddam, his age, and his self-professed devoutness as a Muslim. Soon after the Ba'thist takeover in 1968, Tilfah was appointed governor of Baghdad Province, which then included Tikrit. His tenure until 1973 as governor and subsequent leadership of the Civil Service Commission in the mid-1970s permitted him to broaden his influence by dispensing and obtaining favors. [ ]

Tilfah appears to have exploited his ties to religious leaders as well. For years he organized the Iraqi contingent to the annual pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca [ ]

Until recently Saddam used Tilfah as a sounding-board on public opinion and as an adviser. [ ]

[ ] Tilfah appears to have been one of the few Iraqis who could criticize Saddam publicly. [ ]

In the past year or so feuding within the family caused a split between Tilfah and Saddam. [ ]

[ ] Tilfah's widely known corruption also is politically embarrassing for Saddam. [ ]

[ ] Tilfah was strongly suspected of embezzling over \$60 million from a war veterans' fund last year. [ ]

[ ] he also was investigated for corrupt business dealings and influence peddling in 1983. Although he was not brought to trial, we judge that the Iraqi public believes his corruption exceeds acceptable norms. [ ]

#### Adnan Khayrallah

Despite the problems between Saddam and Tilfah, Tilfah's son, Adnan Khayrallah, enjoys Saddam's confidence. Saddam and Adnan grew up together and participated in the assassination attempt against President Qassim in 1959 and the coup of 1968. As Minister of Defense and member of the Military Bureau, Adnan is one of the most powerful men in Iraq. [ ]

[ ] According to the US Embassy, Adnan also has a reputation for womanizing and frequenting night clubs with his cronies. In recent years, however, he appears to have gained increasing respect among senior military officers, in part, we believe, because the military views him as their advocate in talks with Saddam. The US defense attache reports that recent visitors have described Adnan as reasonably competent, an indication, in our view, that he has grown in office. [ ]

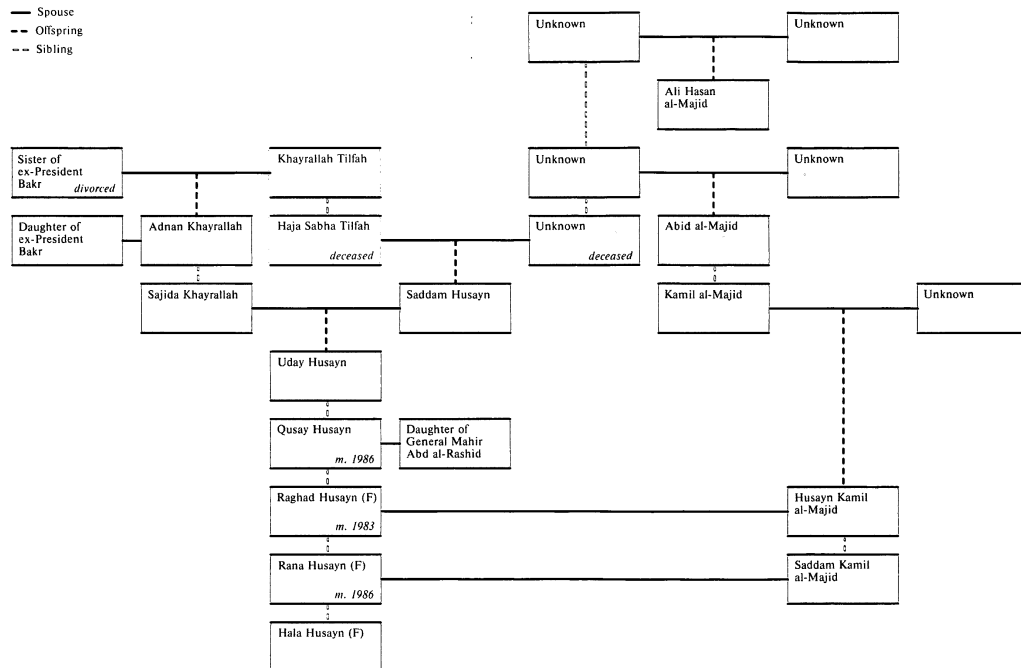
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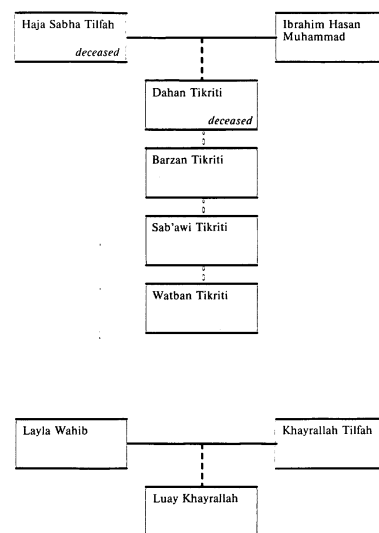
**Figure 16**  
**Saddam Husayn's Family Tree**

## First Marriages

— Spouse  
-- Offspring  
-- Sibling



## Second Marriages



Note: Order of appearance does not imply greater importance or chronological order.

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Adnan has sided with his cousin Saddam in the dispute with Tilfah. According to the US Embassy, Adnan approved of the investigation of his father on corruption charges and endorsed Saddam's harsh treatment of his brother Luay. Adnan's apparent lack of filial loyalty, a highly valued trait in Arab culture, may be explained by the fact that Adnan and Luay are almost certainly half brothers, whereas Adnan and Saddam's wife have the same mother. [redacted]

#### **Saddam's Sons: Heirs Apparent?**

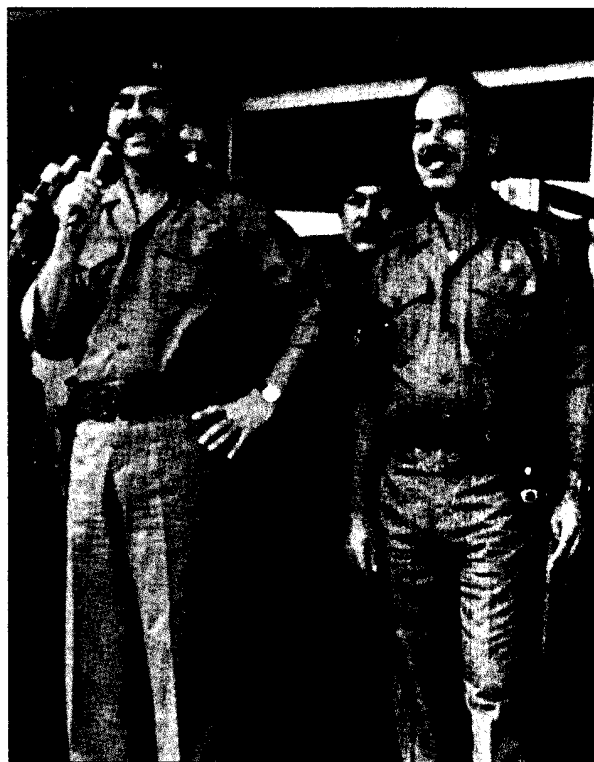
Saddam appears to be grooming his sons, Uday and Qusay, for senior positions in the security apparatus and the government. A few years ago Saddam instructed his sons to become active in the country's sports movement apparently to gain experience in politics and test their mettle, according to the US Embassy. Uday, a recent engineering graduate from the University of Baghdad, is head of the Ba'th Party's daily sports newspaper, the prominent Rashid Sports Club, and the Iraqi Football Association and is vice chairman of the Iraqi Olympic Committee. According to the Embassy, Uday strikes a high profile and was named Iraqi sportsman of the year in 1985. Uday also has held a senior position in the Iraqi Intelligence Service since the fall of 1983. [redacted]

[redacted] a liaison official and watchdog for his father. Qusay Husayn, younger by two years, is still a college student but headed the Iraqi Equestrian Club until he resigned following a spat with the Minister of Youth in 1985. Qusay has no known intelligence duties. [redacted]

Uday's growing strength is reflected in the ouster last June of Minister of Youth Nuri Faysal Shahir following a yearlong battle. According to the US Embassy, Uday used his newspaper to charge Shahir with corruption and to orchestrate "popular" support after Uday resigned from his football and Olympic posts to protest alleged interference from the ministry. [redacted]

#### **Barzan al-Tikriti: The Eclipsed Half Brother**

Saddam removed his half brothers Barzan, Sab'awi, and Watban from influential positions in October 1983 because they posed a potential threat to his rule. Barzan, the most influential, and Sab'awi had been the top two leaders of the IIS, and Watban was



Saddam and Barzan [redacted]

governor of Salah ad-Din Province. [redacted]

[redacted] he had acquired enormous power after four years as Saddam's principal security officer, was abusing that power to the detriment of Saddam's interests, and was also establishing an independent base of support that Saddam viewed as threatening. [redacted]

Under Barzan the IIS had grown to be Iraq's preeminent security service. Barzan in turn had become one of the most feared and hated men in Iraq through capricious arrests and torture. His alleged corruption and interference in military matters were alienating civilians and Ba'thist military officers. He also had established a private network of informants that was independent of the intelligence services and the party.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]  
The US Embassy says that Husayn keeps a close eye on Tikriti affairs for Saddam. [Redacted]  
[Redacted]

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Family strains also contributed to the departure of Barzan and the other half brothers. According to the US Embassy, Saddam had been unhappy with Barzan's corruption and personal behavior for more than a year before his dismissal in 1983. [Redacted]

- *Ali Hasan al-Majid*, an uncle of Husayn Kamil, was appointed chief coordinator of internal security and intelligence activities in December 1986. He headed the Directorate General of Security from 1983, when Barzan was ousted from the IIS, to 1986. Under Ali Hasan's leadership, the Directorate's power relative to the IIS appears to have increased. The Directorate has primary responsibility for internal security in the civilian sector. According to the US Embassy, Ali Hasan is a confidant of Saddam, a childhood playmate of Adnan Khayrallah, and a brother-in-law of Khayrallah Tilfah. His membership on the Military Bureau since 1978 and his promotion to full membership on the Regional Command last year attest to Saddam's confidence in him and his influence.

Since Barzan's removal, Saddam has attempted to purge the IIS of Barzan supporters and has arrested his corrupt business associates. [Redacted]

- *Abid Hasan al-Majid*, older brother of Ali Hasan, has headed the National Security Bureau of the Ba'th Party since 1979. The bureau supervises all intelligence gathering and monitors loyalty within the party, according to the US Embassy. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Jockeying for Power**

Internecine rivalries within Saddam's family have increased over the past three years, a reflection in part of Saddam's increasing preference for the paternal side of his family. The coming of age of Saddam's sons and nephews has contributed to friction over the distribution of power. [Redacted]

**The Majid Cousins—Rising Stars**

The ouster of Saddam's half brothers opened the way for the advancement of Saddam's paternal cousins, the Majids:

- *Husayn Kamil al-Majid*, since marrying Saddam's daughter Raghad in 1983, has been a rising star in the family. He has been responsible for presidential security and serves as a watchdog over other security services. [Redacted]

The Majids are using their increasingly strong power base in the security services to isolate and weaken their rivals. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[redacted] family connections—as always—exist. Hazza was a cousin of Barzan's wife. [redacted]

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#### Popular Perceptions of the Tikritis

Many Iraqis believe that the Tikritis rather than the Ba'th Party or the government run Iraq. The US Embassy reports that Iraqis believe that Tikritis all have power and money. Similarly they resent the widely known corruption of some Tikritis, particularly Khayrallah Tilfah. Barzan Tikriti and other Tikritis in the security field have earned the fear and hatred of the populace. The Embassy says they also resent the privileged lives of Saddam's sons and their abuse of power, stories of which have circulated widely, at least in Baghdad:

- According to the US Embassy, Uday harassed the family of an Iraqi girl who had spurned his advances and drove them out of the country.

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The estrangement between Saddam and Barzan appears permanent. [redacted]

[redacted] according to the US Embassy, Barzan lost his temper in a confrontation with Saddam in August and fired his handgun. Saddam was not hurt, but Barzan and his brother Sab'awi were arrested. We do not know their present status. [redacted]

Despite the depth of the dispute, Saddam will move gingerly against his relatives because Barzan and Tilfah probably retain substantial followings among the Tikritis. In our view, Barzan and Tilfah's business practices have made allies of considerable numbers of senior Tikriti and non-Tikriti government and military officers. As a result, Saddam's strategy may be to steadily undermine the influence of Barzan and Tilfah through intimidation, arrests, and the dismissal of their followers from key positions. [redacted]

There is a chance that some out-of-favor Tikritis may consider striking at Saddam before he gets them.

[redacted] ex-general Umar Hazza, a maternal relative of Saddam, was arrested in August and executed for plotting with military officers to overthrow Saddam. Hazza and his relatives probably feared that the corruption issue would overtake them. Hazza owned four luxurious villas—almost certainly obtained through graft. According to the US Embassy, the villas were razed—a longstanding Iraqi tradition. [redacted]

- The US Embassy says that Qusay's bodyguards fired shots into the rear of an automobile that refused to make room for Qusay's motorcade. The shots killed two young girls.
- The Embassy also reports that friends or bodyguards of Qusay beat up five Frenchmen who had complained about their dangerous behavior on water-jet skis at a popular recreational lake.

[redacted]

Saddam is sensitive to charges of misbehavior on the part of his relatives. He claimed in an Iraqi newspaper interview last August that he watches his family closely for improper behavior and has whipped and caned his nephews, brothers, and sons. The US Embassy reports Saddam ordered that the beating of Luay Tilfah be videotaped and shown to some university professors and Ba'thist cadre. We cannot confirm that he has reined in his sons, but rumors of their abuses appear to be fewer than in past years. [redacted]

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**Trends and Implications**

Saddam's reliance on the Tikritis to secure his power base is increasing. At an extraordinary session of the Ba'th Regional Conference in July 1986, Saddam engineered the expansion of the Regional Command to make room for two more Tikritis, Ali Hasan al-Majid and Kamil Yassin Rashid. Fadhil al-Barraq, newly elected candidate member, stands in the wings. These moves appear to reflect Saddam's concern over potential threats to his rule. Civilians and military officers, including Ba'thists, have increasingly criticized his management of the war. The appointment of Tikriti loyalists will help him detect dissension and counter efforts to weaken or oust him. As criticism has mounted, he probably has concluded that his fellow Tikritis—whose fortunes are directly connected to his own—are more likely to remain loyal. [ ]

Nonetheless, using additional Tikritis to solidify his control may create longer term problems by further narrowing Saddam's power base. A reliance on Tikritis strengthens the popular perception that Iraq and the Ba'th Party are run by Saddam and the Tikritis. Moreover, veteran Ba'thists are likely to resent growing Tikriti influence, and this may weaken their dedication to the party. Young Iraqis probably will find the Ba'thist Party a less desirable vehicle for realizing either their political ambitions or their ideals if they believe that family rather than party interests hold sway. They may sit on the sidelines or become more susceptible to other political groups, such as the Communist Party of Iraq or Shia fundamentalist organizations. [ ]

The arrogant, spoiled behavior of Saddam's sons also weakens Saddam's power base. If Saddam appoints Uday or Qusay to the RCC or the Cabinet or makes one of them a security service head, many Ba'thists will conclude that he is grooming his heir apparent. Many Tikritis and non-Tikritis will resent such a move, and some may be tempted to plot against it. [ ]

Saddam's departure would call into question the future of the Tikritis and their relationship to the Iraqi power structure. We doubt that the Tikritis would support a bid by Saddam's profligate sons to

assume the presidency. In the event of his assassination or death by natural causes, Saddam's extended family would try to retain control of the military and security services. Saddam's relatives in the security apparatus and Minister of Defense Adnan Khayrallah are likely to resist the appointment of a non-Tikriti as president of Iraq or secretary general of the Ba'th Party. The Tikritis may back Minister of Defense Adnan Khayrallah as Saddam's replacement to prevent the appointment of Ba'th Party Deputy Secretary General Izzat Ibrahim or—even worse from the Tikritis' perspective—the more powerful and ambitious First Deputy Prime Minister Ramadan. Barzan al-Tikriti, who almost certainly remains politically ambitious, may attempt a comeback if the opportunity arises. [ ]

The Tikritis, however, probably would have trouble cooperating in a post-Saddam power struggle and may not be strong enough to retain power alone. Saddam has eliminated most potential rivals—including fellow Tikritis. His successor, therefore, probably will have to depend on a coalition with other Ba'thists. We believe that splits and rivalries among Saddam's relatives would weaken their coalition and provide opportunities for non-Tikritis to play one faction off against another. [ ]

These dangers would be all the greater if Saddam were replaced by a coup. Given the Tikritis' control of the military and security services, a coup is likely to be directed by one Tikriti grouping against Saddam and other Tikritis. This would weaken the new regime's survivability. Alternatively, if non-Tikritis gain power by coup, the new leaders probably would cooperate with some Tikritis to gain control of the security and military services. Once secure in power, they might then ease out these Tikritis. [ ]

Unless a powerful figure emerges, Iraq without Saddam risks a return to the political instability that existed before Bakr and Saddam gained control in 1968. Although Saddam's relatives are likely to enjoy initially numerous political advantages, these could rapidly erode as rivals try to build their own power bases. For example, the Tikritis will face competition

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from Moslawis, townsmen from the northern city of Mosul. [ ] the Tikritis have for years been concerned about the strength and cohesion of Moslawi professional military officers. Although we have no evidence that the Moslawis have organized in opposition to Saddam, they and other interest groups, particularly in the military, will pose greater threats to Tikriti control after Saddam leaves the scene. [ ]

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We believe that Tikriti loyalists provide Saddam with the firm grip on power that enables him to pursue more moderate policies. In our view, Iraq's trend toward moderation began in the mid-1970s after Saddam had substantially enhanced his control of the party. [ ]

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Unless the Tikritis are reasonably united behind Saddam's successor, weaker Iraqi leaders are likely to be wary of foreign and domestic policies that expose them to criticism within the party for straying from Ba'thist ideals. We would expect them, for example, to be reluctant to press for closer ties to the United States. Moreover, Iraq probably would become more hostile toward Israel, increasing propaganda and diplomatic activities against Tel Aviv and, after the war with Iran, possibly resuming support for Palestinian groups that conduct terrorist activities against Israel. [ ]

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**Appendix****Key Tikritis****The Immediate Family****Saddam Husayn**

*President of Iraq, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party.*

Saddam uses members of his extended family and other Tikritis to build and maintain his power base. He probably knows his relatives better and believes them to be more loyal because their fortunes are linked to his presidency.

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Saddam, 49, was born in a village outside of Tikrit. His father died shortly after Saddam's birth. Saddam was raised in the house of the family patriarch, Khayrallah Tilfah.

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**Sajida Husayn**

*Saddam's wife and cousin*



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The daughter of Khayrallah Tilfah, she has been married to Saddam, her cousin, since 1963. Sajida, about 49, works as the headmistress of a school. She and Saddam have five children.

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**Uday Husayn**  
*Saddam's oldest son*

*Security officer*

Uday, Saddam's eldest son, is important to his father. He has served as Saddam's watchdog in the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) [redacted]. Uday, a Ba'th Party member, also holds several positions in the nation's sports movement: head of the Iraqi Football Association, vice chairman of the Iraqi Olympic Committee, publisher of the sports newspaper *Ba'th al-Riyadh*, and president of the Rashid Sports Club. [redacted]

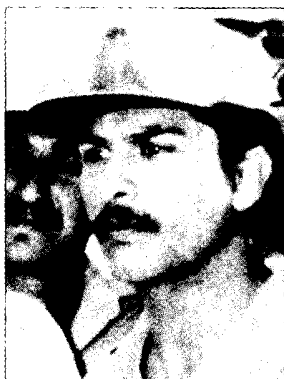
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[redacted] Uday, about 22, was recently graduated from Baghdad University in engineering. [redacted]

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**Qusay Husayn**  
*Saddam's younger son*

[redacted]

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[redacted] Unlike his brother, however, Qusay has undergone military training at his father's behest to allay the public perception that Saddam shelters his sons from sacrifice, according to Embassy officers. In 1986, Qusay, about 20, married the eldest daughter of his relative, VII Corps commander Gen. Mahir Abd al-Rashid. [redacted]

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The Maternal Relatives

The Tilfah Branch

**Khayrallah Tilfah**

*Saddam's uncle and surrogate father*

*Former governor of Baghdad*

The 70-year-old patriarch of Saddam's extended family, Khayrallah Tilfah is a surrogate father and longtime mentor to his nephew, Saddam. He has served as Saddam's "eyes and ears" on Iraqi society. As governor of Baghdad Province (1968-73), chairman of the Civil Service Commission (1973-77), and chairman of the Iraqi war veterans' fund, Tilfah helped Saddam build his power base. [redacted]

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In 1963, Saddam married Sajida, Tilfah's daughter. [redacted]



**Adnan Khayrallah**

*Saddam's cousin and brother-in-law*

*Defense Minister*

*Member, Revolutionary Command Council and Regional Command*

*Deputy Prime Minister*

*Deputy Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces*

*Member, Military Bureau*

Adnan Khayrallah, Tilfah's son, is a cousin, brother-in-law, and key supporter of Saddam. Three years apart in age, he and Saddam were reared as brothers. In building his power base during the 1970s, Saddam engineered Adnan's marriage to the daughter of then President Ahmad al-Bakr and his appointment as Defense Minister in 1977. [redacted]

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Adnan plays an active role in running the war. [redacted]

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[redacted] Adnan commanded the politically important Republican Guard brigade in the early 1970s. He graduated from the Iraqi Military College (1961), the Staff College (1970), and the College of Law and Politics at Mustansiriya University (1976). He is about 47. [redacted]

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**Luay Khayrallah**  
*Saddam's cousin*

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Luay Khayrallah imitates the rowdy behavior of his cousins Uday and Qusay Husayn. Like them, he is known for high living and abuse of his position. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Luay [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] has recently undergone military training. About 20, he is the brother or, more likely, half brother of Adnan Khayrallah and Saddam's wife. [REDACTED]

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### The Half Brothers



**Barzan al-Tikriti**  
*Saddam's half brother*

*Former Director, IIS*

Barzan has gone from being one of Saddam's most useful relatives to one of his most troublesome. Although only in his midthirties, Barzan has served as Saddam's office director (1968-73), a member of his assassination squad (1971-72), and his personal representative in the IIS (1977-79).

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[REDACTED] As head of the IIS during 1979-83, Barzan ruthlessly suppressed opposition to Saddam. [REDACTED]

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**Sab'awi al-Tikriti**  
*Saddam's half brother*

*Former Deputy Director, IIS*

A loyal supporter of his younger brother Barzan, Sab'awi was ousted with Barzan in the 1983 intelligence shakeup. He was dismissed from his positions in the IIS and on the international relations committee of the National Assembly. Sab'awi has a reputation for ruthlessness. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] During 1982, Sab'awi was office director of the Military Bureau of the Ba'th Party. He is about 39.

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**Watban al-Tikriti**  
*Saddam's half brother*

*Ex-governor of Salah ad-Din Province*

Watban's fate has matched that of his brothers Sab'awi and Barzan. Saddam dismissed him from his position as governor of Salah ad-Din Province (which includes Tikrit) when he fired Barzan. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] He was also guilty of corruption. Watban's only security training was a short course in England. He is about 31. [REDACTED]

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**The Paternal Side**

**Husayn Kamil al-Majid**  
*Saddam's cousin and son-in-law*

*Director, Presidential Security Service*

Maj. Husayn Kamil al-Majid, still in his early thirties, has become the most powerful figure in the palace after Saddam. He is responsible for all aspects of presidential security and oversees the intelligence services and Tikriti affairs for Saddam, according to the Embassy. Husayn Kamil married Saddam's eldest daughter in 1983. [REDACTED]

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**Ali Hasan al-Majid**  
*Saddam's cousin*

*Chief coordinator of internal security and intelligence*

*Member, Regional Command*

Ali Hasan al-Majid, like his nephew Husayn Kamil, is an integral part of Saddam's current power structure. He is a close confidant of the President, a childhood playmate of Adnan Khayrallah, and a brother-in-law of Khayrallah Tilfah [REDACTED]. As head of the Directorate General of Security from 1983 to 1986, he protected Saddam's rule by infiltrating the government bureaucracy with Directorate operatives, according to the Embassy. A longtime Ba'thist, he has served in the party as a section command member, director general of the secretariat

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(1976-83), and a member of the Military Bureau since 1978. Underscoring Ali Hasan's importance, Saddam engineered his promotion to full member of the party's Regional Command in 1986. Saddam appointed him in December to head the Regional Command committee that coordinates internal security and intelligence. Ali Hasan, about 45, holds a degree from the Defense College of Bakr University for Higher Studies. [REDACTED]

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**Abid Hasan al-Majid**

*Saddam's cousin*

*Director, Ba'th Party National Security Bureau*

Abid Hasan is the older brother of Ali Hasan. From 1979 to at least 1986 he headed the party's National Security Bureau, which supervises all intelligence gathering and monitors loyalty in the party ranks, according to the Embassy. He has concurrently been security director of the National Assembly. [REDACTED]

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**Fadhil Salfij al-Azzawi**

*Saddam's cousin*

*Deputy Director, IIS*

A longtime Ba'thist, Fadhil al-Azzawi probably is involved in the day-to-day operations of the IIS. He is a first cousin of Saddam, and his wife is a first cousin of Saddam's wife. Azzawi is 42, industrious, and dedicated to his work. [REDACTED]

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Azzawi was Chief of the Iraqi Interests Section in Washington from 1978 to 1980. US officials say that he was well disposed toward the United States and worked hard to normalize bilateral relations. [REDACTED]

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## Other Key Tikritis

**Fadhil al-Barraq***Probably a distant cousin of Saddam**Director, IIS*

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Various reported as a cousin or nephew of Saddam, Fadhil al-Barraq is a longtime Ba'thist with important intelligence responsibilities. As head of the IIS since 1984, Barraq has reduced the independent power and abuses of authority characteristic of the organization under Barzan. During the past year, Barraq's influence has risen following the IIS's investigation of corruption by foreign companies in Iraq and his election in July as a candidate member of the Regional Command, the party's highest body.

A former Army officer, Barraq has served as an aide to former President Bakr, as a member of the party's Baghdad military branch (1969), and as military attache to the USSR during 1971-76. Shortly after his return to Iraq in 1976, he was appointed head of the Directorate General of Security.

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Barraq has also been a member of the Military Bureau since 1976. He earned a Ph.D. during his Moscow assignment. He is in his midforties.

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**Mahir Abd al-Rashid***Saddam's cousin (possibly)**Commander, VII Army Corps*

Lt. Gen. Mahir Abd al-Rashid generally enjoys Saddam's confidence despite his inability thus far to retake Iraq's captured city of Al Faw. As I and III Corps commander earlier in the war, Abd al-Rashid turned back Iranian forces at Panjwin, the Hawr al Hawizah (marshes), and the Majnoon Islands, albeit with heavy casualties. He was briefly Director of Military Intelligence in 1983. In addition, his eldest daughter recently married Saddam's son Qusay.

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